

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently amended): An optical fiber device comprising:

a housing having a wall, wherein said housing is vacuum drawn and pressurized with a gas to prevent moisture from entering said housing;

an optical fiber holding tube extending through said wall and having a first end and a second end, said first end of said optical fiber holding tube contained in said housing and said second end of said optical fiber holding tube located outside of said housing;

a plurality of optical fibers extending from said first end of said optical fiber holding tube to said second end of said optical fiber holding tube without interruption; and

a gas blocking device attached to said first end of said optical fiber holding tube, wherein said optical fibers extend through said gas blocking device, and wherein said gas blocking device contains material surrounding said optical fibers such that said gas blocking device creates a seal substantially preventing gas from passing through said optical fiber holding tube, **and wherein said plurality of optical fibers are strength members that reinforce said material.**

Claim 2 (Original): The optical fiber device according to claim 1, wherein said gas is nitrogen.

Claim 3 (Original): The optical fiber device according to claim 1, further including a water seal sealing an interface between said wall and said optical fiber holding tube extending through said wall.

Claim 4 (Original): The optical fiber device according to claim 1 wherein said gas blocking device includes:

a fiber containing body having a passageway containing said plurality of fibers; and
a fiber organizing insert secured at one end of said fiber containing body such that said fiber organizing insert is prevented from rotating with respect to said fiber containing body, wherein said fiber organizing insert includes a plurality of fiber receiving holes each receiving respective ones of said plurality of fibers.

Claim 5 (Original): The optical fiber device according to claim 4, further including a locking member securing said fiber organizing insert to said one end of said fiber containing body.

Claim 6 (Original): The optical fiber device according to claim 4, wherein said passageway in said fiber containing body includes a wide portion, a narrow portion, and a tapered portion between said wide portion and said narrow portion, and wherein said fiber organizing insert is secured within said wide portion.

Claim 7 (Original): The optical fiber device according to claim 4, wherein said fiber organizing insert is made of a substantially non-compressible material.

Claim 8 (Original): The optical fiber device according to claim 4, wherein said fiber containing body and said fiber holding tube are made of a conductive metal and are soldered together.

Claim 9 (Original): The optical fiber device according to claim 1, wherein said material is hot melt glue.

Claims 10-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (Previously added): The optical fiber device according to claim 4, wherein said passageway in said fiber containing body includes a narrow portion having an inside diameter dimensioned such that said fibers act as strength members within said adhesive in said narrow portion of said passageway.

Claim 22 (Previously added): The optical fiber device according to claim 21 wherein the ratio of the cross-sectional area of said fibers to the cross-sectional area of said narrow portion is about $\frac{1}{2}$.